GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2415
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2001
OPENING UP OF HIGHWAYS AND RAIL ROUTES
RASA SINGH RAWAT

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Highways and Railroutes connecting the neighbouring countries proposed to be opened by the Government;

(b) whether the Government propose to review it in view of the serious incidents of terrorism;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) to (d) The Government are of the view that the promotion of people-to-people contacts by all means including making travel between India and neighbouring countries as simple and easy as possible will contribute to the development of friendly ties.

In keeping with this approach, Government have been working with the Government of Bangladesh on increasing and diversifying the transport linkages between the two countries. On July 10, 2001 an Agreement was signed to introduce a bus service between Agartala and Dhaka. An Agreement was also signed on July 12, 2001 to start a passenger train service between India and Bangladesh.

Similarly, on July 9, 2001 Government announced that Pakistani passport holders will be allowed to come by the road route and obtain visas at the check posts at Attari. An additional check post will be opened at Munabao, in Rajasthan. Similar check posts will also be opened at designated points along the International Border and Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir.

Agreement for operationalising railway link between Raxaul (India) and Birgunj (Nepal) is under discussion between Governments of India and Nepal. This link, once commissioned, will help movement of containerised cargo from Kolkata/Haldia Port to Nepal and vice-versa.

Government are vigilant and firmly resolved to take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the country, and to resist terrorism until it is decisively crushed.